

? 1565] DESCRIPTION OF A NEGRO
VILLAGE, 97

the entering in, that goeth through the town; and another overthwart street, which maketh their towns crossways.

Their houses are built in a rank, very orderly, in the face of the street: and they are made round, like a dovecot, with stakes set foil of Palmito leaves, instead of a wall. They are not much more than a fathom large [*across*], and two of height; and thatched with Palmito leaves very close, other some with reeds : and over the roof thereof, for the better garnishing of the same, there is a round bundle of reeds prettily contrived like a lover [*louvre*]. In the inner part? they make a loft of sticks whereupon they lay all their provision of victuals. A place they reserve at their entrance for the kitchen ; and the place they lie in is divided with certain mats, artificially made with the rind of the Palmito trees. Their bedsteads are of small staves laid along, and raised a foot from the ground, upon which is laid a mat; and another upon them, when they list. For other covering they have none.

In the middle of the town, there Is a house larger and higher than the others, but in form alike; adjoining unto which, there is a place made of four good stanchions of wood, and a round roof over it; the ground also raised round with clay, a foot high : upon the which floor were strewed many fine mats. This is the Consultation House; the like whereof is in all towns, as the Portuguese affirm. In which place, when they sit in council, the King or Captain sitteth in the midst; and the Elders upon the floor by him (for they give leverence to their Elders), and the common sort sit round about them. There they sit to examine matters of theft; which if a man be taken with, to steal but one Portuguese cloth from another, he is sold to the Portuguese for a slave. They consult also and take order what time they shall go to wars ; and (as it is certainly reported by the Portuguese) they take order in gathering of the fruits, in the season of the year; and also of Palmito wine (which is gathered by a hole cut in the top of a tree and a gorde [*gourd*] set there for the receiving thereof, which falleth in by drops; and yieldeth fresh wine again within a month), and this being divided, part and portion like, to every man, by the judgement of the Captain [*Chief*] and Elders; ever man holdeth himself contented. And this, surely, I judge to be a very good order ; for other-